

Letterkenny HMMWV program offers value for the warfighter

LETTERKENNY ARMY DEPOT, Pa. — Letterkenny Army Depot is now producing 27 additional HMMWVs per month at no additional cost to the taxpayers. Col. Robert Swenson said, “It’s basically producing 27 more HMMWVs for free. It’s more value for the Warfighter.” The HMMWV line is a hub of activity; banging, welding and constant movement are commonplace. Employees have assisted in gaining efficiencies on the production line by participating in process improvement events.

Lean concepts and methodologies focus on reducing waste, standardizing work areas and reducing floor space have transformed the production line. The HMMWV recapitalization program exploded as the depot’s most aggressive program in the Tactical Vehicle Fleet. The original goal (January 2005) was to produce five HMMWVs a day. Currently they are producing 15 HMMWVs per day.

Letterkenny’s on-going Lean efforts have remarkable savings. With no additional money allocated, the depot has increased production from 276 vehicles a month to 302 per month.

Letterkenny has reduced the overall HMMWV work hours from 274 to 174 per vehicle over the last year. The implementation of Lean has identified efficiencies that freed up both interior and exterior floor space allowing the depot to seek new missions and triple its workload in the last three years. The direct result allows more equipment to return to the Soldier faster.

Letterkenny is a two-time Shingo Prize recipient of the Public Sector Award. This award recently recognized LEAD for not only saving American taxpayers’ money, but increasing the quality of HMMWVs for Warfighters.

Business Week has called the Shingo Prize the “Nobel prize of manufacturing.” It was established in 1988 and named for Japanese industrial engineer Shigeo Shingo, described as an “engineering genius” and one of the world’s leading experts in improving manufacturing processes.